
THE BHAGAVAT:
ITS PHILOSOPHY, ITS ETHICS & ITS THEOLOGY.

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THE BHAGAVAT:
ITS PHILOSOPHY, ITS ETHICS & ITS THEOLOGY
(A LECTURE DELIVERED AT DINAJPORE IN 1869)

BY

THAKUR BHAKTIVINODE



EDITED BY

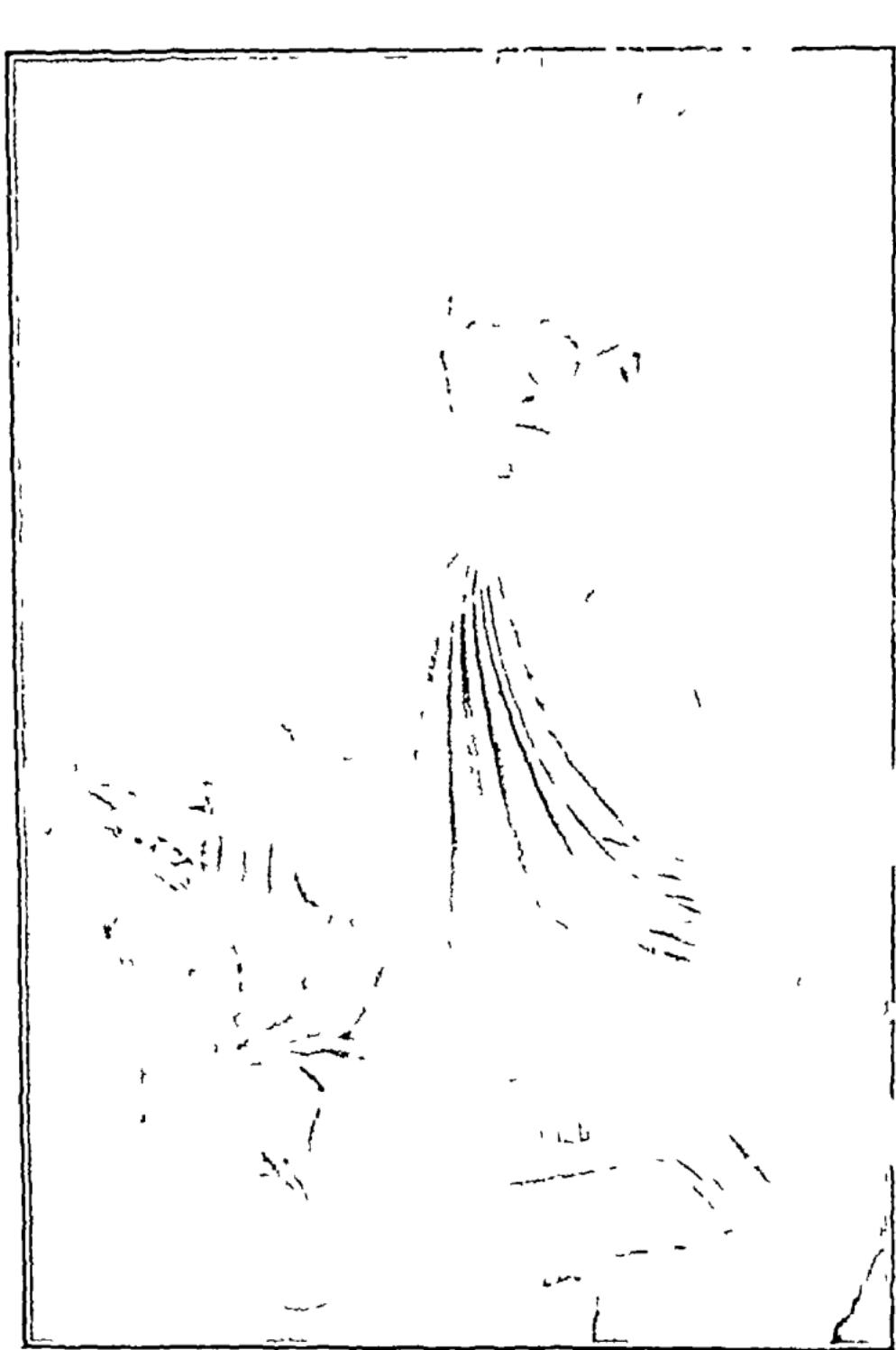
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May the Lord shower His choicest blessings on the pious donor for his spontaneous love for His Lotus Feet.

MADRAS, }
17th February, 1936. } K VIDYABHUSAN.

THE BHAGAVAT :

Its Philosophy, Its Ethics and
Its Theology.

GENTLEMEN,

We love to read a book which we never read before. We are anxious to gather whatever information is contained in it and with such acquirement our curiosity stops. This mode of study prevails amongst a great number of readers, who are great men in their own estimation as well as in the estimation of those, who are of their own stamp. In fact, most readers are mere repositories of facts and statements made by other people. But this is not study. The student is to read the facts

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with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention. Students like satellites should reflect whatever light they receive from authors and not imprison the facts and thoughts just as the Magistrates imprison the convicts in the jail! Thought is progressive. The author's thought must have progress in the reader in the shape of correction or development. He is the best critic, who can show the further development of an old thought; but a mere denouncer is the enemy of progress and consequently of Nature. "Begin anew," says the critic, because the old masonry does not answer at present. Let the old author be buried because his time is gone. These are shallow expressions. Progress certainty is the law of nature and there must

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be corrections and developments with the progress of time. But progress means going further or rising higher. Now, if we are to follow our foolish critic, we are to go back to our former terminus and make a new race, and when we have run half the race, another critic of his stamp will cry out. "Begin anew, because the wrong road has been taken!" In this way our stupid critics will never allow us to go over the whole road and see what is in the other terminus. Thus the shallow critic and the fruitless reader are the two great enemies of progress. We must shun them.

The true critic, on the other hand, advises us to preserve what we have already obtained, and to adjust our race from that point where we have

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arrived in the heat of our progress. He will never advise us to go back to the point whence we started, as he fully knows that in that case there will be a fruitless loss of our valuable time and labour. He will direct the adjustment of the angle of the race at the point where we are. This is also the characteristic of the useful student. He will read an old author and will find out his exact position in the progress of thought. He will never propose to burn the book on the ground that it contains thoughts which are useless. No thought is useless. Thoughts are means by which we attain our objects. The reader, who denounces a bad thought, does not know that a bad road is even capable of improvement and conversion into

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a good one. One thought is a road leading to another. Thus the reader will find that one thought which is the object to-day will be the means of a further object to-morrow. Thoughts will necessarily continue to be an endless series of means and objects in the progress of humanity. The great reformers will always assert that they have come out not to *destroy* the old law, but to *fulfil* it. Valmiki, Vyasa, Plato, Jesus, Mahomed, Confucius and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu assert the fact either expressly or by their conduct.

The *Bhagavat* like all religious works and philosophical performances and writings of great men has suffered from the imprudent conduct of useless readers and stupid critics. The former have done so much injury to the

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work that they have surpassed the latter in their evil consequence. Men of brilliant thoughts have passed by the work in quest of truth and philosophy, but the prejudice which they imbibed from its useless readers and their conduct, prevented them from making a candid investigation. Not to say of other people, the great genius of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the sect of Brahmoism, did not think it worth his while to study this ornament of the religious library. He crossed the gate of the *Vedanta*, as set up by the *Mayavada* construction of the designing Shankaracharya, the chosen enemy of the Jains, and chalked his way out to the unitarian form of the Christian faith, converted into an Indian appearance. Ram

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Mohan Roy was an able man. He could not be satisfied with the theory of illusion contained in the *Maya-vada* philosophy of Shankar. His heart was full of love to Nature. He saw through the eye of his mind that he could not believe in his identity with God. He ran furious from the bounds of Shankar to those of the *Koran*. There even he was not satisfied. He then studied the pre-eminently beautiful precepts and history of Jesus, first in the English translations and at last in the original Greek, and took shelter under the holy banners of the Jewish Reformer. But Ram Mohan Roy was also a patriot. He wanted to reform his country in the same way as he reformed himself. He knew it fully that truth does not

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belong exclusively to any individual man or to any nation or particular race. It belongs to God, and man whether in the Poles or on the Equator, has a right to claim it as the property of his Father. On these grounds he claimed the truths inculcated by the Western Saviour as also the property of himself and his countrymen, and thus he established the *Samaja* of the Brahmos independently of what was in his own country in the Beautiful *Bhagavat* * His noble deeds will certainly procure him a high position in the history of reformers But then, to speak the

* This is gathered from what Ram Mohan Roy told the public in the prefaces to the three dissertations, which he wrote about the precepts of Jesus as compiled by him from the Gospels and in answer to Dr Marshman, the Serampore Missionary

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truth, he would have done more if he had commenced his work of reformation from the point where the last reformer in India left it. It is not our business to go further on this subject. Suffice it to say, that the *Bhagavat* did not attract the genius of Ram Mohan Roy. His thought, mighty though it was, unfortunately branched like the Raniganj line of the Railway, from the barren station of Shankaracharya, and did not attempt to be an extension from the Delhi Terminus of the great *Bhagavat* expounder of Nadia. We do not doubt that the progress of time will correct the error, and by a further extension the branch line will lose itself somewhere in the main line of progress. We expect these attempts in an abler reformer of

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the followers of Ram Mohan Roy.

The *Bhagavat* has suffered alike from shallow critics both Indian and outlandish. That book has been accursed and denounced by a great number of our young countrymen, who have scarcely read its contents and pondered over the philosophy on which it is founded. It is owing mostly to their imbibing an unfounded prejudice against it when they were in school. The *Bhagavat*, as a matter of course, has been held in derision by those teachers, who are generally of an inferior mind and intellect. This prejudice is not easily shaken when the student grows up unless he candidly studies the book and ruminates on the doctrines of Vaishnavism. We are ourselves witness of the fact. When

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we were in the college, reading the philosophical works of the West and exchanging thoughts with the thinkers of the day, we had a real hatred towards the *Bhagavat*. That great work looked like a repository of wicked and stupid ideas, scarcely adapted to the nineteenth century, and we hated to hear any arguments in its favour. With us then a volume of Channing, Parker, Emerson or Newman had more weight than the whole lots of the *Vaishnav* works. Greedily we poured over the various commentations of the Holy Bible and of the labours of the Tattwa Bodhini Sabha, containing extracts from the *Upanishads* and the *Vedanta*, but no work of the Vaishnavs had any favour with us. But when we advanced in age and our religious sentiment

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received development, we turned out in a manner Unitarian in our belief and prayed as Jesus prayed in the Garden. Accidentally, we fell in with a work about the Great Chaitanya, and on reading it with some attention in order to settle the historical position of that Mighty Genius of Nadia, we had the opportunity of gathering his explanations of *Bhagavat*, given to the wrangling Vedantist of the Benares School. The accidental study created in us a love for all the works which we find about our Eastern Saviour. We gathered with difficulties the famous *Kuichas* in Sanskrit, written by the disciples of Chaitanya. The explanations that we got of the *Bhagavat* from these sources, were of such a charming character that we procured

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a copy of the *Bhagavat* complete and studied its texts (difficult of course to those who are not trained up in philosophical thoughts) with the assistance of the famous commentaries of Shreedhar Swami. From such study it is that we have at least gathered the real doctrines of the Vaishnavs. Oh ! What a trouble to get rid of prejudices gathered in unripe years !

As far as we can understand, no enemy of Vaishnavism will find any beauty in the *Bhagavat*. The true critic is a generous judge, void of prejudices and party-spirit. One, who is at heart the follower of Mohamad will certainly find the doctrines of the New Testament to be a forgery by the fallen angel. A Trinitarian Christian, on the other hand, will denounce the

precepts of Mohamad as those of an ambitious reformer. The reason simply is, that the critic should be of the same disposition of mind as that of the author, whose merits he is required to judge. Thoughts have different ways. One, who is trained up in the thoughts of the Unitarian Society or of the *Vedant* of the Benares School, will scarcely find piety in the faith of the Vaishnavs. An ignorant Vaishnav, on the other hand, whose business it is to beg from door to door in the name of Nityananda will find no piety in the Christian. This is, because the Vaishnav does not think in the way in which the Christian thinks of his own religion. It may be, that both the Christian and the Vaishnav will utter the same sentiment, but they will

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never stop their fight with each other only because they have arrived at their common conclusion by different ways of thoughts. Thus it is, that a great deal of ungenerousness enters into the arguments of the pious Christians when they pass their imperfect opinion on the religion of the Vaishnavs

Subjects of philosophy and theology are like the peaks of large towering and inaccessible mountains standing in the midst of our planet inviting attention and investigation. Thinkers and men of deep speculation take their observations through the instruments of reason and consciousness. But they take different points when they carry on their work. These points are positions chalked out by the circumstances of their social and philosophical

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life, different as they are in the different parts of the world Plato looked at the peak of the Spiritual question from the West and Vyasa made the observation from the East, so Confucius did it from further East, and Schlegel, Spinoza, Kant and Goethe from further West. These observations were made at different times and by different means, but the conclusion is all the same in as much as the object of observation was one and the same. They all hunted after the Great Spirit, the unconditioned Soul of the Universe. They could not but get an insight into it. Their words and expressions are different, but their import is the same. They tried to find out the absolute religion and their labours were crowned with success, for God gives

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all that He has to His children if they want to have it. It requires a candid, generous, pious and holy heart to feel the beauties of their conclusions. Party-spirit—that great enemy of truth—will always baffle the attempt of the enquirer, who tries to gather truth from religious works of their nations, and will make him believe that absolute truth is no where except in his old religious book. What better example could be adduced than the fact that the great philosopher of Benares will find no truth in the universal brotherhood of man and the common fatherhood of God? The philosopher, thinking in his own way of thought, can never see the beauty of the Christian faith. The way, in which Christ thought of his own father, was

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love absolute and so long as the philosopher will not adopt that way of thinking he will ever remain deprived of the absolute faith preached by the western Saviour. In a similar manner the Christian needs adopt the way of thought which the Vedantist pursued, before he can love the conclusions of the philosopher. The critic, therefore, should have a comprehensive, good, generous, candid, impartial and a sympathetic soul

What sort of a thing is the *Bhagavat*, asks the European gentleman newly arrived in India. His companion tells him with a serene look, that the *Bhagavat* is a book, which his Oriya bearer daily reads in the evening to a number of hearers. It contains a jargon of unintelligible and savage

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literature of those men who paint their noses with some sort of earth or sandal, and wear beads all over their bodies in order to procure salvation for themselves. Another of his companions, who has travelled a little in the interior, would immediately contradict him and say that the *Bhagavat* is a Sanskrit work claimed by a sect of men, the Goswamis, who give *Mantras*, like the Popes of Italy, to the common people of Bengal, and pardon their sins on payment of gold enough to defray their social expenses. A third gentleman will repeat a third explanation. Young Bengal, chained up in English thoughts and ideas, and wholly ignorant of the Pre-Mohamedan history of his own country, will add one more explanation by saying that the

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Bhagavat is a book, containing an account of the life of Krishna, who was an ambitious and an immoral man ! This is all that he could gather from his grandmother while yet he did not go to school ! Thus the Great *Bhagavat* ever remains unknown to the foreigners like the elephant of the six blind who caught hold of the several parts of the body of the beast ! But Truth is eternal and is never injured but for *a while* by ignorance.

The *Bhagavat* itself tells us what it is —

*Nigama kalpataror galitam
phalam
Sukamukhad amrita drava
samyutam
Pibata Bhagavatam rasam
alayam*

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*Mukutahor asika bhuvi
bhavukah.*

“It is the fruit of the Tree of thought (Vedas) mixed with the nectar of the speech of Shookdeva. It is the temple of spiritual love ! O ! Men of Piety ! Drink deep this nectar of *Bhagavat* repeatedly till you are taken from this mortal frame ”

The Garooda Puran says, again —

*Gianthoshtadasa sahasra,
Srimad Bhagavatabhidha
Saiva veda tihasanam saram
saram Samud dhilam
Saiva vedanta sajam hi, Sri
Bhagavatam ishyate
Tadi asamitati ipi asya Nanya-
tra syadi atikvachit.*

“ The *Bhagavat* is composed of 18,000 Slokas. It contains the best

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parts of the *Vedas* and the *Vedanta*. Whoever has tasted its sweet nectar, will never like to read any other religious book."

Every thoughtful reader will certainly repeat this eulogy. The *Bhagavat* is pre-eminently *the Book* in India. Once enter into it, and you are transplanted, as it were, into the spiritual world where gross matter has no existence. The true follower of the *Bhagavat* is a spiritual man who has already cut his temporary connection with phenomenal nature, and has made himself the inhabitant of that region where God eternally exists and loves. This mighty work is founded upon inspiration and its superstructure is upon reflection. To the common reader it has no charms and is full of difficulty. We

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are, therefore, obliged to study it deeply through the assistance of such great commentators as Shreedhar Swami and the Divine Chaitanya and his contemporary followers.

Now the great preacher of Nadia, who has been Deified by his talented followers, tells us that the *Bhagavat* is founded upon the four slokas which Vyasa received from Narada, the most learned of the created beings. He tells us further that Brahma pierced through the whole universe of matter for years and years in quest of the final cause of the world but when he failed to find it abroad, he looked into the construction of his own spiritual nature, and there he heard the Universal Spirit speaking unto him, the following words —

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*Jnanam me paramam guhyam,
Yadvijnana Samanvitam
Sarahasyam tadan gamcha, grihana
gaditam maya
Yavanaham yathabhavo, yadrupa
gunakormakah
Tathaiva tatva Vijnanam astu te,
madanugrahat
Ahameva samevage, nanyat yat
Sadasatparam
Paschadaham yadetachchha, yova-
shishyeta Sosmyaham
Ritei tham yat pratiyeta, na pratiye-
ta chatmani
Tadvidat Atmano mayam yatha
bhaso yatha tamah.*

“Take, O Brahma ! I am giving you
the knowledge of my own self and of

his own spiritual nature and then it was that the above truth was communicated to him for his own good and the good of the world. The sage immediately perceived that his former works required supercession in as much as they did not contain the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In his new idea he got the development of his former idea of religion. He commenced the *Bhagavat* in pursuance of this change. From this fact, our readers are expected to find out the position which the *Bhagavat* enjoys in the library of Hindu Theological works.

The whole of this incomparable work teaches us, according to our Great Chaitanya, the three great truths which compose the absolute religion of man. Our Nuddea Preacher calls

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from them *Sambandha*, *Avidheya* and *Prayojana*, i.e., the relation between the Creator and the created, the duty of man to God and the prospects of humanity. In these three words is summed up the whole ocean of human knowledge as far as it has been explored up to this era of human progress. These are the cardinal points of religion and the whole *Bhagavat* is, as we are taught by Chaitanya, an explanation both by precepts and example, of these three great points.

In all its twelve *Skandhas* or divisions the *Bhagavat* teaches us that there is only one God without a second, who was full in Himself and is and will remain the same. Time and space, which prescribe conditions

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to created objects are much below His Supreme Spiritual nature, which is unconditioned and absolute. Created objects are subject to the influence of time and space, which form the chief ingredients of that principle in creation which passes by the name of Maya. Maya is a thing which is not easily understood by us who are subject to it, but God explains, as much as we can understand in our present constitution, this principle through our spiritual perception. The hasty critic starts like an unbroken horse at the name of Maya and denounces it as a theory identical with that of Bishop Berkley. "Be patient in your enquiry" is our immediate reply. In the mind of God there were ideas of all that we perceive in eternal existence with him, or else

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God loses the epithet of omniscient so learnedly applied to Him. The imperfect part of nature implying want proceeded also from certain of those ideas, and what, but a principle of Maya, eternally existing in God subject to His Omnipotence, could have a hand in the creation of the world as it is? This is styled as the *Maya Shakti* of the Omnipresent God. Cavil as much as you can. This is a *truth* in relation to the created universe

This Maya intervenes between us and God as long as we are not spiritual, and when we are able to break off her bonds, we, even in this mortal frame, learn to commune in our spiritual nature with the unconditioned and the absolute. No, Maya does not mean a false thing only, but it means conceal-

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ment of eternal truth as well. The creation is not Maya itself but is subject to that principle. Certainly, the theory is idealistic but it has been degraded into foolishness by wrong explanations. The materialist laughs at the ideal theory saying, how could his body, water, air and earth be mere ideas without entity, and he laughs rightly when he takes Shankaracharya's book in his hand as the butt end of his ridicule.* The true idealist

* The Padma Puran thus puts the following expression into the mouth of Shiva, and Chaitanya puts great stress on this text in his denunciation of Shankar's Mayavada

Maya vadam asachchhastram, prachchhanam bouddha
mevacha

Mayaiva kathitam Devi kalau brahma rupina

Maya philosophy is Boodhism in disguise and I (God of *Tama Goona*) have given expression to it in the shape of a Brahmin meaning Shankaracharyya

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must be a dualist also. He must believe all that he perceives as nature created by God full of spiritual essence and relations, but he must not believe that the outward appearance is the truth. The *Bhagavat* teaches that all that we healthily perceive is true, but its material appearance is transient and illusory. The scandal of the ideal theory consists in its tendency to falsify nature, but the theory as explained in the *Bhagavat* makes nature true, if not eternally true as God and His ideas. What harm there can be if man believes in nature as spiritually true and that the physical relations and phases of society are purely spiritual ?

No, it is not merely changing a name but it is a change in nature also. Nature is eternally spiritual but the

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intervention of Maya makes her gross and material. Man, in his progress attempts to shake off this gross idea, childish and foolish in its nature and by subduing the intervening principle of Maya, lives in continual union with God in his spiritual nature. The shaking off this bond is salvation of the human nature. The man who has got salvation will freely tell his brother that "If you want to see God, see me, and if you want to be one with God, you must follow me." The *Bhagavat* teaches us this relation between man and God, and we must all attain this knowledge. This sublime truth is the point where the materialist and the idealist must meet like brothers of the same school and this is the point to which all philosophy tends.

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This is called *Sambandha Jnana* of the *Bhagavat*, or, in other words, the knowledge of relations between the conditioned and the Absolute. We must now attempt to explain the second great principle inculcated by the *Bhagavat*, i.e., the principle of duty. Man must spiritually worship his God. There are three ways, in which the Creator is worshipped by the created.

Vadanti tat tatvavida stattvam

yat jnanamadvyayam

*Brahmeti Paramatmeti Bhagava-
niti shabdyate.*

All theologists agree in maintaining that there is only one God without a second, but they disagree in giving a name to that God owing to the different modes of worship, which they

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adopt according to the constitution of their mind. Some call Him by the name of *Brahma*, some by the name of *Paramatma* and others by the name of *Bhagawan*. Those who worship God as infinitely great in the principle of admiration call him by the name of *Brahma*. This mode is called *Jnana* or knowledge. Those who worship God as the Universal Soul in the principle of spiritual union with him, give him the name of *Paramatma*. This is *yog*. Those who worship God as *all* in all with all their heart, body and strength style Him as *Bhagawan*. This last principle is *Bhakti*. The book that prescribes the relation and worship of *Bhagawan*, procures for itself the name of *Bhagavat* and the worshipper is also called

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by the same name.*

Such is *Bhagavat* which is decidedly *the Book* for all classes of theists. If we worship God spiritually as *all in all* with our heart, mind, body and strength, we are all *Bhagavatas* and we lead a life of spiritualism, which neither the worshipper of *Brahma*, nor the *Yogi* uniting his soul with (*Paramatma*) the universal soul can obtain. The superiority of the *Bhagavat* consists in the uniting of all sorts of theistical worship into one excellent principle in human nature, which passes by the name of *Bhakti*. This word has no equivalent in the English language. *Piety, devotion,*

* This explanation is gathered from what Chaitanya said to Sanatana—*vide* Madhyabhasa, Chaitanya Charitamrita .

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resignation and spiritual love unalloyed with any sort of petition except in the way of repentance, compose the highest principle of *Bhakti*. The *Bhagavat* tells us to worship God in that great and invaluable principle, which is infinitely superior to human knowledge and the principle of *Yog*.

Our short compass will not admit of an explanation of the principle of *Bhakti* beautifully rising from its first stage of application in the form of *Brahmic* worship in the shape of admiration which is styled the *Shanta Rasa*, to the fifth or the highest stage of absolute union in love with God, sweetly styled the *Madhura Rasa* of *Prem Bhakti*. A full explanation will take a big volume which is not our object here to compose. Suffice it to say that

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the principle of *Bhakti* passes five distinct stages in the course of its development into its highest and purest form.* Then again when it reaches the last form, it is susceptible of further progress from the stage of *Prema* (love) to that of *Mahabhava* which is in fact a complete transition into the spiritual universe where God alone is the bridegroom of our soul.

The voluminous *Bhagavat* is nothing more than a full illustration of this principle of continual development and progress of the soul from gross matter to the All-Perfect Universal Spirit who is distinguished as personal, eternal, absolutely free, all powerful and all intelligent. There is

*These five stages are called *Shanta*, *Dasya*, *Sakhy*, *Batsalya* and *Madhura*

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nothing gross or material in it. The whole affair is spiritual. In order to impress this spiritual picture upon the student who attempts to learn it, comparisons have been made with the material world, which cannot but convince the ignorant and the impractical. Material examples are absolutely necessary for the explanation of spiritual ideas. The *Bhagavat* believes that the spirit of nature is the truth in nature and is the only practical part of it.

The phenomenal appearance of nature is truly theoretical, although it has had the greatest claim upon our belief from the days of our infancy. The outward appearance of nature is nothing more than a sure index of its spiritual face. Comparisons are there-

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fore necessary. Nature as it is before our eyes, must explain the spirit, or else the truth will ever remain concealed, and man will never rise from his boyhood though his whiskers and beard grow white as the snows of the Himalayas. The whole intellectual and moral philosophy is explained by matter itself. Emerson beautifully shows how all the words in moral philosophy originally came from the names of material objects. The words heart, head, spirit, thought, courage, bravery, were originally the common names of some corresponding objects in the material world. All spiritual ideas are similarly pictures from the material world, because matter is the dictionary of spirit, and material pictures are but the shadows of the

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spiritual affairs which our material eye carries back to our spiritual perception. God in his infinite goodness and kindness has established this unfailing connection between the truth and the shadow in order to impress upon us the eternal truth which he has reserved for us. The clock explains the time, the alphabet points to the gathered store of knowledge, the beautiful song of a harmonium gives the idea of eternal harmony in the spirit world, to-day and to-morrow and day-after-to-morrow thrust into us the ungrasped idea of eternity and similarly material pictures impress upon our spiritual nature the truly spiritual idea of religion. It is on these reasonable grounds that Vyasa adopted the mode

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of explaining our spiritual worship with some sorts of material phenomena, which correspond with the spiritual truth. Our object is not to go into details, so we are unable to quote some of the illustrations within this short compass.

We have also the practical part of the question in the 11th book of *Bhagavat*. All the modes by which a man can train himself up to *Prem Bhakti* as explained above, have been described at great length. We have been advised first of all, to convert ourselves into most grateful servants of God as regards our relation to our fellow brethren. Our nature has been described as bearing three different phases in all our bearings in the word. Those phases are named *Sattwa, Raja,*

Tama. *Sattwa Guna* is that property in our nature, which is purely good as far as it can be pure in our present state. *Raja Guna* is neither good nor bad. *Tama* is evil. Our *Provritis* or tendencies and affections are described as the main spring of all our actions, and it is our object to train up those affections and tendencies to the standard of *Sattwa Guna*, as decided by the moral principle. This is not easily done. All the springs of our actions should be carefully protected from *Tama Guna*, the evil principle, by adopting the *Raja Guna* at first, and when that is effected, man should subdue his *Raja Guna* by means of the natural *Sattwa Guna* which is the most powerful of them when cultivated. Lust, idleness,

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and converted into positive good work. Then we are to look to all living beings in the same light in which we look to ourselves, *i.e.*, we must convert our selfishness into all *possible disinterested* activity towards all round us. Love, charity, well-doing and devotion to God will be our only work. We then become the servants of God by obeying His High and Holy wishes. Here we begin to be *Bhaktas* and we are susceptible of further improvement in our spiritual nature, as we have described above. All this is covered by the term *Abidheya*, the second cardinal point in the supreme religious work, the *Bhagavat*. We have now before us, the first two cardinal points in our religion, explained somehow or other in the terms and thoughts

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expressed by our saviour who lived only four centuries ago in the beautiful village of Nadia, situated on the banks of the Bhagirathi. We must now proceed to the last cardinal point termed by that great Re-establisher *Prayojana* or prospects.

What is the object of our spiritual development, our prayer, our devotion and our union with God? The *Bhagavat* tells that the object is not enjoyment or sorrow, but continual progress in spiritual holiness and symmetry.*

In the common-place books of the Hindu religion in which the *Raja* and *Tama Gunas* have been described as

* Roop Goswami one of the disciples of Mahaprabhu Chaitanya says —

Bhuktimuktisprīha yavat Pishachi hrī vartate
Tavadbhaktisukhasyatra Kathamabyudayo bhavet.

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the ways of religion, we have description of a local heaven and a local hell ; the Heaven as beautiful as anything on earth and the Hell as ghastly as any picture of evil. Besides this Heaven we have many more places, where good souls are sent up in the way of promotion ! There are 84 divisions of the hell itself, some more dreadful than the one which Milton has described in his *Paradise Lost*. These are certainly poetical and were originally created by the rulers of the country in order to check evil deeds of the ignorant people, who are not able to understand the conclusion of philosophy. The religion of the *Bhagavat* is free from such a poetry. Indeed, in some of the chapters we meet with descriptions of these hells and heavens, and accounts

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of curious tales, but we have been warned somewhere in the book, not to accept them as real facts, but as inventions to overawe the wicked and to improve the simple and the ignorant. The *Bhagavat*, certainly tells us of a state of reward and punishment in future according to deeds in our present situation. All poetic inventions, besides this spiritual fact, have been described as statements borrowed from other works in the way of preservation of old traditions in the book which superseded them and put an end to the necessity of their storage. If the whole stock of Hindu Theological works which preceded the *Bhagavat* were burnt like the Alexandrian Library and the sacred *Bhagavat* preserved as it is, not a part of the

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philosophy of the Hindus except that of the atheistic sects, would be lost. The *Bhagavat* therefore, may be styled both as a religious work and a compendium of all Hindu history and philosophy.

The *Bhagavat* does not allow its followers to ask anything from God except eternal love towards Him.* The kingdom of the world, the beauties of the local heavens and the sovereignty over the material world are never the subjects of Vaishnav prayer. The Vaishnav meekly and humbly says,

* In the third Skandha of the *Bhagavat* Kripa tells his mother —

Salokyā sarshtiś śimipyā Sarupyā kātāmapy uti

Divyānamām Nagrībhānānti Vina mitsevāmā jñānāḥ

God offers all sorts of happiness to his servants but they do not want them except his holy service.

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“ Father, Master, God, Friend and Husband of my soul ! Hallowed be thy name ! I do not approach You for anything which You have already given me I have sinned against You and I now repent and solicit Your pardon. Let Thy Holiness touch my soul and make me free from grossness Let my spirit be devoted meekly to Your Holy service in absolute love towards Thee I have called You my God, and let my soul be wrapped up in admiration at Your greatness ! I have addressed You as my master and let my soul be strongly devoted to your service. I have called You my friend, and let my soul be in reverential love towards You and not in dread or fear ! I have called You my husband and let my spiritual

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nature being clean I implore You, for ever living and never dieing, & feeling at last ' Father ! let me have strength enough to go up to You as the centre of my soul, so that I may be one in eternal love ! Power to the world !'"

Of such a nature is the prayer of the *Bhagavat* ! One who can read the book will find the highest form of prayer in the expression of proclam towards the universal and omnipresent Soul with powers to convert all unholy strength into meek submission or entire annihilation. This prayer will show what is the end and object of Vaishnav's Life. He does not expect to be the king of a certain part of the universe after his death, nor does he dread a local, fiery and turbulent hell,

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the idea of which would make the hairs of young Hamlet stand erect like the forks of a *porcupine*! His idea of salvation is not total annihilation of personal existence as the Buddhists and the 24 Gods of the Jains procured for themselves! The Vaishnav is the meekest of all creatures devoid of all ambition. He wants to serve God spiritually after death as he has served Him both in spirit and matter while in life. His constitution is a spirit and his highest object of life is divine and holy love.

There may be a philosophical doubt How the human soul could have a distinct existence from the universal soul when the gross part of the human constitution will be no more? The Vaishnav can't answer it, nor can any

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man on earth explain it. The Vaishnava meekly answers, he seeks the truth but he cannot understand it. The *Bhagavat* merely affirms that the Vishnava soul when free from gross matter will distinctly exist not in time and space but spiritually in the eternal spiritual kingdom of God where love is life, and hope and charity and continual ecstasy without change are its various exhibitions.

In considering about the true essence of the Deity, two great errors face before us and enlighten us back to ignorance and its satisfaction. One of them is the idea that God is above all attributes both material and spiritual and is consequently above all conception. This is a noble idea but useless. If God is above conception and with-

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out any sympathy with the world, how is then this creation? This Universe composed of properties? The distinctions and phases of existence? The differences of value? Man, woman, beast, trees, magnetism, animal magnetism, electricity, landscape water and fire? In that case Shankaracharyya's Mayavad theory would be absolute philosophy.

The other error is that God is all attribute, *i.e.*, intelligence, truth, goodness and power. This is also a ludicrous idea. Scattered properties can never constitute a Being. It is more impossible in the case of belligerent principles, such as Justice and Mercy and Fulness and Creative Power. Both ideas are imperfect. The truth, as stated in the *Bhagavat* is that pro-

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perties, though many of them belligerent, are united in a spiritual Being where they have full sympathy and harmony. Certainly this is beyond our comprehension. It is so owing to our nature being finite and God being infinite. Our ideas are constrained by the idea of space and time, but God is above that constraint. This is a glimpse of Truth and we must regard it as Truth itself often, says Emerson, a glimpse of truth is better than an arranged system and he is right.

The *Bhagavat* has, therefore, a personal, all-intelligent, active, absolutely free, holy, good, all-powerful, omnipresent, just and merciful and supremely Spiritual Deity without a second, creating, preserving all that is in the Universe. The highest object

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of the Vaishnav is to serve that Infinite Being for *ever spiritually* in the activity of *Absolute Love*

These are the main principles of the religion inculcated by the work, called the *Bhagavat*, and Vyasa, in his great wisdom, tried his best to explain all these principles with the aid of pictures in the material world. The shallow critic summarily rejects this great philosopher as a man-worshipper. He would go so far as to scandalise him as a teacher of material love and lust and the injurious principles of exclusive asceticism. The critic should first read deeply the pages of the *Bhagavat* and train his mind up to the best eclectic philosophy which the world has ever obtained, and then we are sure he will pour panegyrics

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upon the principal of the College of Theology at Badrikasram which existed about 4,000 years ago. The shallow critic's mind will undoubtedly be changed, if he but reflects upon one great point, i.e., how is it possible that a spiritualist of the School of Vyasa teaching the best principles of Theism in the whole of the *Bhagavat* and making the four texts quoted in the beginning as the foundation of his mighty work could have forced upon the belief of men that the sensual connection between a man with certain females is the highest object of worship! This is impossible, dear Critic! Vyasa could not have taught the common *Vyragi* to set up an *Akhra* (a place of worship) with a number of females! Vyasa, who could teach us

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repeatedly in the whole of *Bhagavat* that sensual pleasures are momentary like the pleasures of rubbing the itching hand and that man's highest duty is to have spiritual love with God, could never have prescribed the worship of sensual pleasures.* His descriptions are spiritual and you must not connect matter with it. With this advice, dear critic, go through the *Bhagavat* and I doubt not you will, in three months, weep and repent to

* Vyasa himself apprehended these stupid critics and with a view to prevent degradation of his spiritual principles he gave the following text to the mouth of Kapila in the third Skhanda —

Na tadasya bhaven moho bandhaschanyatra Sangatah
Yoshit sangad yatha pumso Yatha tatsangi Sangatah

The company of a woman or that of a man who cultivated friendship with woman with an immoral heart is very injurious to the man of a religious temperament.

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God for despising this Revelation through the heart and brain of the great Badarayan

Yes you nobly tell us that such philosophical comparisons produced injury in the ignorant and the thoughtless. You nobly point to the immoral deeds of the common Vyragis, who call themselves "The followers of the *Bhagawat* and the great Chaitanya". You nobly tell us that Vyasa unless purely explained may lead thousands of men into great trouble in time to come. But dear critic! Study the history of ages and countries! Where have you found the philosopher and the reformer fully understood by the people? The popular religion is fear of God and not the pure spiritual love which Plato, Vyasa, Jesus, and Chai-

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tanya taught to their respective peoples! Whether you give the absolute religion in figures or simple expressions or teach them by means of books or oral speeches, the ignorant and the thoughtless must degrade it. It is indeed very easy to tell and sweet to hear that absolute truth has such an affinity with the human soul that it comes through it as if intuitively. No exertion is necessary to teach the precepts of true religion. This is a deceptive idea. It may be true of ethics and of the alphabet of religion but not of the highest form of faith which requires an exalted soul to understand. It certainly requires previous training of the soul in the elements of religion just as the student of the fractions must have a previous

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attainment in the elemental numbers and figures in Arithmetic and Geometry Truth is good, is an elemental truth, which is easily grasped by the common people. But if you tell a common patient, that God is infinitely intelligent and powerful in His spiritual nature, he will conceive a different idea from what you entertain of the expression All higher Truths though intuitive, require previous education in the simpler ones. That religion is the purest, which gives you the purest idea of God, and the absolute religion requires an absolute conception by man of his own spiritual nature How then is it possible that the ignorant will ever obtain the absolute religion as long as they are ignorant? When thought awakens, the thinker is no

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more ignorant and is capable of obtaining an absolute idea of religion. This is a truth and God has made it such in His infinite goodness, impartiality and mercy. Labour has its wages and the idle must never be rewarded. Higher is the work, greater is the reward is an useful truth. The thoughtless must be satisfied with superstition till he wakes and opens his eyes to the God of love. The reformers, out of their universal love and anxiety for good work endeavour by some means or other to make the thoughtless drink the cup of salvation, but the latter drink it with wine and fall into the ground under the influence of intoxication, for the imagination has also the power of making a thing what it never was.

Thus it is that the evils of nunneries and the corruptions of the *Akhanas* proceeded. No, we are not to scandalise the Saviour of Jerusalem or the Saviour of Nadia for these subsequent evils Luthers, instead of critics, are what we want for the correction of those evils by the true interpretation of the original precepts.

Two more principles characterise the *Bhagavat*, viz. liberty and progress of the soul throughout eternity. The *Bhagavat* teaches us that God gives us truth and he gave it to Vyasa, when we earnestly seek for it. Truth is eternal and unexhausted. The soul receives a revelation when it is anxious for it. The souls of the great thinkers of the by-gone ages, who now live spiritually; often approach our enqui-

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ring spirit and assist it in its development. Thus Vyasa was assisted by Narada and Brahma Our Shastras, or in other words, books of thought do not contain all that we could get from the infinite Father No book is without its errors God's revelation is absolute truth, but it is scarcely received and preserved in its natural purity We have been advised in the 14th Chapter of the 11th Skandha of the *Bhagavat* to believe that truth when revealed is absolute, but it gets the tincture of the nature of the receiver in course of time and is converted into error by continual exchange of hand from age to age Now revelations, therefore, are continually necessary in order to keep truth in its original purity We are thus

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warned to be careful in our studies of old authors, however wise they are reputed to be. Here we have full liberty to reject the wrong idea, which is not sanctioned by the peace of conscience. Vyasa was not satisfied with what he collected in the *Vedas*, arranged in the *Puranas* and composed in the *Mahabharata*. The peace of his conscience did not sanction his labours. It told him from inside "No, Vyasa ! you can't rest contented with the erroneous picture of truth which was necessarily presented to you by the sages of bygone days ! You must yourself knock at the door of the inexhaustible store of truth from which the former ages drew their wealth. Go, go up to the fountain-head of truth where no pilgrim meets with dis-

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appointment of any kind. Vyasa did it and obtained what he wanted. We have been all advised to do so. Liberty then is the principle, which we must consider as the most valuable gift of God. We must not allow ourselves to be led by those who lived and thought before us. We must think for ourselves and try to get further truths which are still undiscovered. In the 23rd text 21st Chapter 11th *Skandha* of the *Bhagavat* we have been advised to take the spirit of the *Shastras* and not the words. The *Bhagavat* is therefore a religion of liberty, unmixed truth and absolute love.

The other characteristic is progress. Liberty certainly is the father of all progress. Holy liberty is the cause of progress upwards and upwards in

eternity and endless activity of love. Liberty abused causes degradation and the Vaishnav must always carefully use this high and beautiful gift of God. The progress of the *Bhagavat* is described as the rise of the soul from Nature up to Nature's God, from Maya, the absolute and the infinite. Hence the *Bhagavat* says of itself —

*Nigama kalpataror galitam phalam
Sukamukhad amrita diava samyutam
Pibata Bhagavatam rasa malayam
Muhuraho rasika bhuvi bhavukah.*

“ It is the fruit of the tree of thought, mixed with the nectar of the speech of Sukhdeva It is the temple of spiritual love! O! Men of piety! Drink deep this nectar of *Bhagavat* repeatedly till you are taken from this mortal frame!”

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Then the Saragrahi or the progressive Vaishnav adds —

*Surasa sarayutam phala matrayat
Vinasatadi viruddha gunamcha tat
Tyaja viragamito madhuपayinah
Rasika sararasam piba bhavukah.*

“ That fruit of the tree of thought is a composition, as a matter of course of the sweet and the opposite principles. O ! Men of piety, like the bee taking honey from the flower, drink the sweet principle and reject that which is not so.”

The *Bhagavat* is undoubtedly a difficult work and where it does not relate to picturesque description of traditional and poetical life, its literature is stiff and its branches are covered in the garb of an unusual form of Sanskrit poetry Works on philosophy

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must necessarily be of this character. Commentations and notes are therefore required to assist us in our study of the book. The best commentator is Sreedhar Swami and the truest interpreter is our great and noble Chaitanayadeva. God bless the spirit of our noble guides

These great souls were not like comets appearing in the firmament for a while and disappearing as soon as their mission is done. They are like so many suns shining all along to give light and heat to the succeeding generation. Long time yet when they will be succeeded by others of their mind, beauty and calibre. The texts of Vyasa are still ringing in the ears of all theists as if some great spirit is singing them from a distance! Badrikasram! What

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an awful name ! The seat of Vyasa and the selected religion of thought ! The pilgrim tells us that the land is cold ! How mightily did the genius of Vyasa generate the heat of philosophy in such a cold region ! Not only heated the locality but sent its ray far to the shores of the sea ! Like the great Napolean in the political world, he knocked down empires and kingdoms of old and by-gone philosophy by the mighty stroke of his transcendental thoughts ! This is real power ! Atheist philosophy of Shankha, Charbak, the Jains and the Buddhists shuddered with fear at the approach of the spiritual sentiments and creations of the *Bhagavat* philosopher ! The army of the atheists was composed of gross and impotent creatures like the legions that stood

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under the banner of the fallen Lucifer, but the pure, holy and spiritual soldiers of Vyasa, sent by his Almighty Father were invincibly fierce to the enemy and destructive of the unholy and the unfounded He that works in the light of God, sees the minutest things in creation, he that works the power of God is invincible and great, and he that works with God's Holiness in his heart, finds no difficulty against unholy things and thoughts God works through his agents and these agents are styled by Vyasa himself as the Incarnation of the power of God All great souls were incarnations of this class and we have the authority of this fact in the *Bhagavat* itself —

Avatarahyasan khy eya Hares
Sattvanidher dvija

Yatha vidasinah kulyah sarasmuh
Sahasrashah.

“O! Brahmans! God is the soul of the principle of goodness! The incarnations of that principle are innumerable! As thousands of watercourses come out of one inexhaustible fountain of water, so these incarnations are but emanations of that infinitely good energy of God which is full at all times”

The *Bhagavat*, therefore, allows us to call Vyasa and Narada, as *Shaktyavesh Avatars* of the infinite energy of God, and the spirit of this text goes far to honour all great reformers and teachers who lived and will live in other countries. The Vaishnav is ready to honour all great men without distinction of caste, because they are

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filled with the energy of God See how universal is the religion of *Bhagavat*. It is not intended for a certain class of the Hindus alone but it is a gift to man at large in whatever country born and whatever society bred In short Vaishnavism is the Absolute Love binding all men together into the infinite, unconditioned and absolute God May its peace reign for ever in the whole universe in the continual development of its purity by the exertion of the future heroes, who will be blessed according to the promise of the *Bhagavat* with powers from the Almighty Father, the Creator, Preserver, and the Annihilator of all things in Heaven and Earth



Bhagabat Speech

Appendix

The teaching of Srimad Bhagabat falls into three distinct parts according as it treats of (1) Sambandha or Relationship, (2) Abhidheya or the Function or Activity that pertains to the Relationship, and (3) Prayojana or Object or Fruit of such Activity.

The aphorisms of the Upanishads, which contain the highest teaching of the Vedic literature, are presented in the form of a systematic body of knowledge under the heads of Sambandha, Abhidheya and Prayojana in the compilation of the Brahmasutra. In his Satsandarbha Sree Jeera Goswami has applied the same method of

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treatment to the contents of the Srimad Bhagabat which is admitted to be the only authentic *bhasya* or exposition of the Brahmasutra.

But the first of the six *sandarbhas*, *viz.*, the *Tattvasandartha*, applies itself to the elucidation of the epistemology of transcendental knowledge and discusses incidentally the purpose, definition and scope of the principles of classification of the Brahmasutra. It supplies as it were the key to the knowledge that is detailed in the following five *sandarbhas*. It has made possible the comparative study of religion on the only admissible and scientific basis. Its main conclusions are summarised below.¹

¹ Bhag 10/14/3, 10/14/29, 10/2/32, 10/14/4, 11/20/31,
1/2/6, Ba R S P B, 1/9, 1/10

Transcendental epistemology

Sree Krishna, the Ultimate Reality, is One without a second.¹ Sree Krishna, the Absolute Integer, is distinct from His shakti² or counterwhole including her integrated, and dissociable fractional parts in their synthetic and analytic manifestations. Sree Krishna is the Predominating Absolute His shakti is the predominated Absolute in the three positions of antaranga, tatastha and bahiranga respectively³

Antaranga is that which pertains to the proper Entity of the Absolute Person. It is also called Swarupa Sakti for this reason. The literal meaning of the word antaranga is "that which

1 Bhag 1/3/23, Ch Ch Adi 5/14²

2 Bhag 1/18/19

3. Svet. 1/3, 1/16, 4/5; Geeta 4/6, 7/4-5, 9/8-10, Bhag 2/9/33, 2/5/13, Vish P. 1/12/69, 6/7/61, Ch Ch. M 20/252-257

belongs to the inner body" Sakti is rendered as "power" Tatastha means literally 'that which is on the border-line as between land and water' This intermediate power does not belong to any definable region of the Person of Sree Krishna It manifests itself on the border line between the inner and the outer body of the Absolute. The power that manifests itself on the outer body is bahiranga sakti. As there is no duality between the Body and Entity of the Absolute Person the distinctions as between the inner, outer and marginal positions of His Body are in terms of the realisation of the individual soul.

Although Sree Krishna is One without a second, He has His Own multiple Forms corresponding to the degree and

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variety of His Subjective Manifestations The Subjective Entity of Sree Krishna is not liable to any transformation. His different Forms are, therefore, aspects of the One Form manifesting Themselves to the different aptitudes of His sevitors.

But the power of Sree Krishna is transformable by the will of Sree Krishna These transformations of power in the cases of the antaranga and tatastha saktis are eternal processes. In the case of the bahiranga sakti the transformations of power are temporary manifestations The phenomenal world is the product of the external power of Sree Krishna The Absolute Realm is the transformation of the inner power. Individual souls are the transformations of the marginal power. The

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conception of parinati or substantive change is not applied to the transformations of the inner and marginal powers. It is applied only to the transformations of the outer power. The eternal transformations of the inner power are called "tadrupabaibhava" or the display of the connotation of the Visible Figure of the Divinity. Individual souls or jeevas are the eternal infinitesimal emanations of the marginal power, capable of subserviency to the inner power but also susceptible to dissociation from the working of the inner power.

The conception of sakti or the predominated Absolute and the transformations and products of the same is developed by Sree Ramanuja for the negative purpose of refuting the claims of the impersonalist school of keval-

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advaitavada to Vedic or more properly Upanisadic, sanction of undifferentiated monism. The system of Sree Ramanuja is called Visistadvaita. He shows that the Unity of the Absolute is not tampered by the entitative existence of His attributive connotation and its subservient activities. The teaching of Sree Krishna Chaitanya, which is identical with that of Srimad Bhagavat, supplements and develops the conception of Sakti of Sree Ramanuja in most important respects.

Sree Krishna is termed Advaya-Jnana in Srimad Bhagavat. It may be rendered as Absolute Knowledge. Absolute Knowledge cannot be challenged. He can only be approached by the method of complete self-surrender

by the reciprocal, otherwise ineligible, cognition of individual souls. Transcendental epistemology is differentiated from empiric epistemology in respect of relationship, function and object for the reason that it refers to entities that are located beyond the range of assertive cognitive endeavour normally practised by the deluded people of this world for their temporary purposes. By the peculiarities of their infinitesimality, essentially spiritual nature and marginal position all individual souls have the constitutional option of choice between complete subserviency and active or passive hostility to Sree Krishna. These opposed aptitudes lead them to the adoption of correspondingly different methods for the realisation of the respective ends.

Those methods that are adopted for the practice of active hostility to the Absolute are termed *pratyaksha* (direct individual perception) and *paroksha* (associated collective perception by many persons past and present) respectively. The *aparoksha* method (the method of cessation from individual and collective perception) leads to the position of neutrality. The *pratyaksha* and *paroksha* methods are diametrically opposed to the methods approved by the Bhagavat for the search of the Truth. The *aparoksha* method also tends to an unwholesome and negative result if it seeks to stand on the mere rejection of the *pratyaksha* and *paroksha* methods without trying to progress towards the positive transcendence. Such inactive policy would indeed be

tantamount to the practice of passive hostility to the Absolute and as such is even more condemnable than open hostility. No method can be recognised as suitable for the quest of the Truth that is actuated more or less by the purpose of opposing the Absolute Supremacy of Sree Krishna. In other words, individual souls cannot realise the subjective nature of the Absolute except by the exercise of their fullest subserviency to Sree Krishna and His inner power.

The failure of individual souls to find the Truth is brought about by their own innate perversity. They possess perfect freedom of choice as between complete subserviency to Sree Krishna and the practice of active or passive hostility to Him. There is no

other alternative open to them. If they choose to refuse to serve they have to practise hostility or indifference towards the Absolute. The perverse individual soul is not obstructed in the active exercise of his freedom of choice. He is enabled to exercise the functions of hostility and indifference, within consistent deterring limits, by the wonderful contrivance of the deluding power of Sree Krishna. The continued deliberate exercise of such hostility and indifference towards the Absolute by the perverse individual soul results necessarily in the suicidal abdication of all activity by the deliberate offender.

The methods that are adopted for practising active and complete subserviency to the Absolute are termed respectively as adhokshaja (external or

reverential method of serving the Transcendental Object of worship) and aprakrita (internal or confidential method of service of the Absolute). Srimad Bhagabat inculcates and divulges the search of the Absolute by the adhokshaja and aprakrita methods. It condemns the pratyaksha and paroksha methods, but recognises the proper use of the aparoksha method.

The pratyaksha, paroksha and the passive aparoksha methods are collectively called the aroha or ascending process. The proper aparoksha, adhokshaja and aprakrita methods constitute the avaroha or descending process. By the adoption of the ascending process the perverse individual soul strives to realise his suicidal end by the positive and negative

perverse manipulation of mundane experience gained through direct and indirect sense-perception. By the descending process the soul is enabled to strive for the realisation of the unalloyed service of the Absolute by the honest exercise of his unreserved receptive aptitude to the Initiative of the Absolute when He is pleased to come down to the plane of his tiny perverse cognition.

The fruits that are realisable by the different methods of endeavour correspond to the particular method that is followed. The pratyaksha and paroksha methods aim at dharma (virtue), artha (utility) and kama (sensuous gratification). The wrong aparoksha method aims at pseudo-moksha (annihilation). The right aparoksha method aims at

positive transcendence. The adhokshaja method aims at bhakti or reverential transcendental service of the Absolute. The aprakrita method has in view the realisation of prema or Divine Love.

Pure theism begins with the first appearance of the positive desire for the service of the Absolute Who is located beyond the range of our sensuous activity.¹ It involves the clear perception of the fact that all empiric activity is the deliberate practice of perverse hostility against the Absolute supremacy of Sree Krishna. The word adhokshaja which is applied in Srimad Bhagabat to the Object of worship refers to the fact that Sree Krishna has reserved the right of not being exposed to human

1 Bhag 1/2/6

senses. The theistic methods alone thus apply to the proper Entity of the Absolute. Those, who are in rebellion against the supremacy of Sree Krishna by the adoption of sensuous activity, are prevented from all access to His presence by the operation of deluding power of Krishna. The individual soul is always susceptible to being thus deluded by maya (the limiting or measuring potency). The conditions of the practice of sensuous activities in this realm of finite existence are provided by Maya for the correction of the suicidal perversity of rebellious souls.

It is in this manner that a person, who is averse to the service of Sree Krishna, is made to proceed along the tracks of Karma and Jnana by the

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ascending process for gaining the bitter experience of the practice of perverse hostility to Sree Krishna and his own self. This world is inhabited by persons who are deliberately addicted to this suicidal course. They are unconditionally committed to the ascending process for sojourning in this realm of ne-science. The method is further characterised by the hypocritical assumption of the validity of experience derived through the senses for providing progressive guidance in the quest of a state of perfect felicity.

The method of quest in which the Truth Himself takes the Initiative is termed the avaroha or descending process. The individual soul can have no access to the Absolute by reason of

his infinitesimality, dissociable marginal position and his own nature as emanation of power. He can, however, have the view of the Truth if the Absolute is pleased to manifest His descent to the plane of his tiny cognition.

Real theism cannot begin till the individual soul is enabled by the manifestation of the Descent of the Absolute to have the opportunity for His service. The Absolute manifests His descent in the Form of the Name or the Transcendental Divine Sound on the lips of His pure devotees Diksha or the communication of the Knowledge of the Transcendental in the Form of the Sound to the submissive receptive cognition of the individual soul by Authorised Agents of the Absolute is

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the Vedic mode of initiation into Transcendental Knowledge

The Name is the Object of worship of all pure souls. The Transcendental Service of the Name, or Bhakti, is the proper function of all souls and the only mode of quest of the Truth.

The pursuit of this right method of quest leads to a growing perfection of Bhakti and progressive realisation of the Subjective Nature of the Object of worship. Srimad Bhagabat uses the pregnant phrase "really real thing" (Vastava Vastu)¹ to denote the Entity Whose service is realisable by and in the right method of quest. Srimad Bhagabat accordingly distinguishes between apparent and real truth that is experienced respectively by the followers.

1 Baag 1/1/2

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of the ascending and descending methods of quest¹ It admits the existence of apparent truth and the followers of apparent truth alongside real truth and the servitors of the real truth.²

The true conception of the Absolute is realised by following the right method of quest The Ultimate Reality is termed in the shattvata shastras as Brahma, Paramatma and Bhagavan³ The Brahma conception stresses the necessity of excluding the deluded, concrete, limited experience of the followers of apparent truth The conception of Paramatma seeks to establish a tangible connection between this temporal world and the Ultimate

1 Bhag 2/9/33
2 Bhag 10/30/24
3 Bhag 1/2/11

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Reality. Both these conception are not only an imperfect, but also a grossly misleading, view of the Absolute. The conception of Bhagavan as Transcendental Personality Who is approachable by Suddha Bhakti or anahamaviddhan of the soul, corresponds to the complete realisation of the Absolute, which necessarily also accommodates and supplements the rival conceptions of Brahma and Paramatma. The comparative view of the three conceptions is clearly stated in a passage of the Karcha of Damodar Swarup quoted in Ch. Ch. 11.30. It is also stated by Sree Jiva Goswami in Sattvasantar-bha 8.

The Brahma conception is misunderstood by exclusive monists (Kevaladvaita of Shankara school) who

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quite disingenuously assume that the conception denied the Transcendental Personality and Figure of the Absolute. The root of the error lies in the apprehension of the impersonalist school that any admission of concreteness in the Absolute will tantamount to the importation of the undesirable features of apparent truth, experienced by the methods of sensuous perception into the transcendental conception of the Absolute Reality favoured by the Scriptures. The method of *suddha bhakti*, while recognising fully the necessity of admitting the transcendental Nature of the Ultimate Reality, does not deny the immanent transcendent connection of the Absolute with manifest mundane existence that is sought to be recognised in the wrong

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offensive way in their conception of Paramatma, by the Yogins. The conception of Bhagavan realised by the process of suddha bhakti harmonises these respective requirements as secondary features of the Proper Transcendental Personality of the Absolute. The adhokshaja and aprakrita methods of quest alone tend to such realisation

Sambandha or relationship implies a numerical reference. The Ultimate Reality is One without a second, though the Aspects of the Absolute may prove different in different eyes. The Unity of the Ultimate Reality carries a similarity to the integer of mathematical conception, denoting Himself as the Object of worship (Sree Krishna), and connoting His shakti in her three

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aspects and her transformations and products. Under relationship, therefore, come all those parts of the teaching of the Bhagabat that reveal the knowledge of the subjective nature of Sree Krishna, the subjective nature of His shakti or power, in all her three aspects, and the subjective nature of the activities of the different aspects of power.

Under abhidheya or function are included all those parts of the teaching of Srimad Bhagabat, which reveal the nature of transcendental worship, and, negatively, of the activity of aversion to Sree Krishna.

Under prayojana or fruit are included those portions of the teaching of Srimad Bhagabat, that deal with prema or spiritual love and negatively with dharma (virtue), artha (material utility),

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kama (lust) and moksha (merging in the Absolute).

These definitions of relationship, function and fruit are supplied by Sree Jiva Goswami in his *Tattvasandarbha* as a preliminary to his comparative treatment of the theme of the *Srimad Bhagabat* under those respective heads. The conception of relationship, function and fruit differs in the case of the followers of the different methods of search of the truth.

Sambandha or Relationship.

The epistemological considerations detailed above on the lines of the study of Sree Jiva Goswami, can alone enable us to understand in any rational form, the genesis of the misconceptions that have been engendered by empiric thinking about the Nature of the Divine

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Personality (Purushottama) that is revealed in the Upanisads, and, in an unambiguous form, in Srimad Bhagabat. Srimad Bhagabat targets the Acme of Personality (Purushottama) in Sree Krishna¹. The worship of Sree Krishna is the only full-fledged, unadulterated function of all souls, the only complete theistic worship. All other forms of worship represent the infinity of gradations of approach towards this complete worship. Pure theism, involving active reciprocal relationship of the soul with the Divinity, does not begin till there is actual realisation of the Transcendental Personality of Bhagavan Sree Krishna. The degree of this realisation corresponds to that of the loving aptitude of

1 Bhag 1/3/28

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His worship The Proper Figure of Sree Krishna (Swayamrupa) is identical with the Entity of Krishna, and is One without a second. There is an infinity of Aspects of the Divine Figure that emanate from the Figure-in-Himself (Swayamrupa) These plural Aspects of the Divine Figure are of the nature of Identities, Manifestations, Expansions, Plenary Parts, Plenary Parts of Parts, Descending Divinities (Avatars). These Divine Aspects, Who are part and parcel of the Divinity in His fullness, are worshipped by the corresponding aptitudes of love of Their respective worshippers

Sree Krishna is possessed of infinite power (shakti). Three aspects of His shakti are distinguishable by the indi-

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vidual soul.¹ These three aspects are swarupa shakti, jiva shakti and maya shakti.

The power of Sree Krishna stands to Him in the attributive reference. The personality of shakti is, therefore, that of the counter-whole of the Absolute in her three aspects and their transformations. The relationship of service subsists between Sree Krishna and His power in all her aspects and transformations. The infinite Aspects of the Divine Personality Himself, emanating from the Figure-in-Himself (Swayam-rupa), are related to Sree Krishna as Servitor-Divinities Who are possessors of power.

These Divine Persons show an order of classification into the cate-

1. Svet. 1/3, 1/16, 4/5, Vish P 6/7/61

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gories of Swayamprakasha (Manifestation-in-Himself), Tadekatmarupa (Essentially Identical Figure) and Abesharupa (The Figure of Divine Superimposition). Of these, Swayamprakasha is, as it were, the other self of Swayamrupa, and is also One without a second. Tadekatmarupa and Abesharupa are multifarious. The account of the Divine Personality in all His Aspects is detailed in Brihad Bhagabatamrita of Sree Sanatana Goswami summarised in Ch. Ch Madhya, chapter 20, verses 165-374. Each of these Divine Persons possesses His own absolute realm (Vaikuntha) where He is served by the infinity of His servitors. These Vaikunthas transcend the countless worlds of finite

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existence constituting the realm of the deluding power (maya).

Sree Krishna is possessed of 64 Divine Excellences (Aprakrita Gunas). Sree Narayana, the Supreme Object of reverential worship, possesses 60 of the full perfections of Divine Excellence. Brahma and Rudra, who wield the delegated powers of mundane creation and destruction, possess 55 Excellences, but not in their full divine measure. Individual souls (jivas) possess 50 of the Excellences of Krishna in an infinitesimal measure.¹ These concrete details are revealed by the Puranas and elaborated in the works of the Goswamis.

The clue to the Supreme Excellence of the Personality of Sree Krishna is

¹ Ch Ch M 23/65-80 (Bh R, S D B 11-25)

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supplied by the principle of rasa which is defined by Sree Rupa as "that ecstatic principle of concentrated deliciousness that is tasted by Sree Krishna and in sequel reciprocated by the serving individual soul, on the plane that transcends mundane thought".¹ Sree Krishna is the Figure-in-Himself of the whole compass of the nectarine principle of rasa (Akhilarasamritamurti).² The Figure of Krishna excels all other Aspects of the Divine Personality by being the Supreme Repository of all the rasas.³

The Supreme Possessor of power, Sri Krishna, is inseparably coupled with His antaranga shakti or power inhering in His Own Proper Figure. Sreemad Bhagabat refers to the service

1 Bh R S D L 5/79

2 Bhag 10/43/17.

3 Bh R S P B 2/32

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of a particular gopee (lit. one who is fully eligible for the service of Sree Krishna) being preferred by Sree Krishna to those of all the other gopees¹ In other words swarupa or antaranga shakti is one and all-perfect. She is the "predominated Absolute." She has her own specific figure, *viz.*, that of Sree Radhika. The two aspects of swarupa shakti, namely, tatastha shakti and maya or bahiranga shakti, reveal themselves in the intermediate and outer regions of the Divine Figure. Jivas or individual souls are detachable infinitesimal emanations of the tatastha shakti, sharing the essence of the plenary spiritual power. Individual souls appear on the border line between the inner and outer zones of divine power.

¹ Bhag 10/30/24.

They have no *locus standi* in their nascent or *tatatha* state. They are eternally exposed to the opposite attractions of *swarupa shakti* and *maya shakti* at the two poles. Their proper affinity is with *swarupa shakti*, but they are susceptible to be overpowered by *maya shakti* at their option. If they choose to be the subservients of *maya shakti*, they are subjected to ignorance of their proper nature which results in confirmed aversion to the service of Sree Krishna. In this manner is brought about the deluded condition of individual souls who sojourn in the realm of *maya*. The constitutions of individual souls in their nascent state and the realm of *maya* are comparable to the outer penumbral and shadowy zones respectively of the

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sun, while the position of antaranga shakti is like the inner ball of light which is the proper abode of the Sun-God who corresponds to Sree Krishna.

Individual souls are detachable infinitesimal emanations of the marginal power located on the border-line and exposed to the opposite pulls of swarupa and maya shaktis. They are distinct from the plenary emanations, manifestations and multiples of swarupa shakti on the one hand and from the products of maya shakti on the other.

The individual soul in his nascent marginal position, is confronted with the alternative of choice between subserviency to the plenary power on the one hand and apparent domination over the deluding power on the other. When he chooses the latter alternative,

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is liable to fall into the error of psilanthropism

Neither should Sridhar Swami be regarded as belonging to the school of exclusive monism, which is the contention of certain scholars of the impersonalistic school. Sridhar Swami has described with true esoteric insight the functions of Rama and other extensions of the figure Sree Radhika, the plenary inner power, in his commentary on the Bhagabat. He is the authoritative commentator of the Eternal Leela of the Divine Personality in His different Aspects and Avatars¹. Sridhar Swami belongs historically to the school of Vishnu Swami, the propounder of the school of suddhadwaita,

1. Bhag 1/7/10, and Sridhar's commentary on the same

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and professes unalloyed devotion to Nrisingha Vishnu

The reticence of Śrīdhara Swami has been supplied by the achintyabhedabhed system propounded by Mahaprabhu Sree Krishna Chaitanya. In the works of Sree Rupa, Sanatana, Jīva and Krishnadas Kavīraj and the commentaries of Sree Viśwanath Chakravarty, the subject of the working of the inner power and individual souls has been treated in all its details in pursuance of the achintyabhedabhed doctrine. This constitutes the most distinctive contribution of Gaudiya Vaishnavism to the cause of pure theism. The clue to the comparative study of the working of power on the transcendental plane is supplied by the account of the *rasa* dance in Srimad

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Bhagabat. The system of suddhad-waita is not incompatible with Gaudiya Vaishnavism in spite of its reticence on this particular aspect. Neither Ramanuja nor Madhwa has treated the subject of the functioning of power in such elaborate manner.

When the individual soul chooses the alternative of unreserved subser-viency to the inner power, he has access to the service of the untampered Personality of the Absolute. The kaivalya state,¹ mentioned in Srimad Bhagabat, is the state of unalloyed devotion to the untampered Personality of the Absolute. This is also explained in that sense in Sridhar Swami's commentary. This unalloyed service, which was promulgated by the school

1. Bhag. 1/7/23.

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of Vishnu Swami, to which Sridhar Swami belongs, forms the basis of the teaching of Srimad Bhagabat

Exclusive monists imagine that the figure of the object of worship exists only in the mundane world and that in the final position there is also no activity of worship. In other words, they deny the possibility of the Leela or the Eternal Transcendental Activities of Sree Krishna. Srimad Bhagabat flatly denies this groundless contention in the most explicit terms.¹ There is total absence of all mundane reference in the transcendental activity of suddha bhakti. Exclusive monists deny the possibility of the total absence of all mundane reference in transcendental manifestation. It is absurd

¹ Bhag 1/7/10, *Ibid*

to class Sridhar Swami, who is the standard commentator of transcendental leela described in Srimad Bhagabat, with the exclusive monists who deny the very possibility of transcendental activity.

The word activity is not expressive of leela. It corresponds to kriya or mundane activity. Transcendental activity has neither beginning nor end. There is, of course, relativity in leela but it is not the unwholesome relativity of mundane activity or kriya. The notion that leela can have an end or termination is due to ignorant confusion between the conceptions of leela and kriya. Suddha bhakti belongs to the category of leela. In Vrindabana the gopees serve Sree Krishna by unconventional amorous

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love. The super-excellence of this service cannot be admitted if the absolutely wholesome nature of all unalloyed activity on the plane of Vraja is disbelieved on principle by one's ignorant perverse judgment.

The function of conditioned souls is of two kinds. The function that is provided by the Varnashrama system for conditioned souls, is not opposed to suddha bhakti. Srimad Bhagabat has treated the Varnashrama system from the point of view of unalloyed devotion. Thereby it has provided an intelligent way of viewing the situation of conditioned souls during their sojourn to the mundane world. The spiritual value of the Varnashrama system is due to the fact that it admits the possibility of the activity of condi-

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tioned souls being endowed with reflected spiritual quality by being directed towards the unalloyed service of the Absolute on the transcendental plane. It is the purpose of the Varnashrama regulation to impart this direction to the activity of conditioned souls. The crucial nature of this theistic purpose of the Varnashrama arrangement is fully treated in Srimad Bhagabat¹. It is not explicitly treated in any other shastric work.

Mahaprabhu Sree Krishna Chaitanya is the great exponent of the unalloyed spiritual function of all souls in its highest developed state. His teaching is identical with that of Srimad Bhagabat. It is in agreement with the principle of kaivalya of suddha-

1. Bhag. 12/13/18

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Suddha bhakti is the, only proper function of all unalloyed individual souls and is located on the plane of transcendence. But all animation is potentially eligible for the transcendental service of the Absolute¹ Vishnu Purana states that conduct, enjoined by Varnashrama system, derives all its value from the fact that its only object is the spiritual service of Vishnu.²

Bhagabat 11-17 & 18 distinguishes between the function of the paramahansa and the activities of conditioned souls enjoined by the Varnashrama system. Varnashrama life is not the unalloyed spiritual life that is led by fully liberated souls. It is the stage preparatory to such life. Neither is it on

1 Bhag 1/2/6, Bb R. S 1/2/33

2 Vish P. 3/8/9

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a part with the life of unmixed consciousness that is led by people outside the Varnashrama society. Every form of activity of conditioned souls outside the Varnashrama system is inspired by meaningless malicious hostility to the Absolute. All such activity is necessarily atheistic. This mundane world is the congenial sphere for the practice of the deluded dominating activity that is coveted by conditioned souls for practising active aversion towards the Absolute. The conditions for such activity are supplied by the deluding power. They constitute the realm of nescience, spiritual ignorance or *achit*. But as soon as the activity of *chit*, or uneclipsed cognition, is aroused in the spiritual essence of the misguided soul, it dissipates by its appearance

such wrong addiction to the ignorant activities of this world and also the susceptibility of being tempted by the deluding power.

There is no common ground between unalloyed spiritual function and the activity of conditioned souls in the grip of nescience. The one does not dove-tail into the other. It is for this reason that the unalloyed spiritual function can never be understood by the resources of the archæologists, historians, allegorists, philosophers, etc., of this world. Such empiric speculations tamper the transcendental Personality of the Absolute. They belong to the realm of nescience and constitute the active denial of the Entity of the Absolute. By indulging in such speculations our

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spiritual nature is deprived of its proper function. .

Conduct enjoined by the Varnashrama system is calculated to counteract the inherent atheistical trend of all worldly activities which are unavoidable in the conditioned state. The distinction between the deliberate atheistical activity of misguided souls, the guided activity of persons belonging to Varnashrama society and the unalloyed spiritual function of fully liberated souls or paramahansas, is hinted in such texts as Mundaka 3-1-2, Svet. 4/6/7, Bhagabat 11/11/6.

Activities that are prompted by the urge for sensuous enjoyment create the discordant diversity of this world. One who is addicted to wordly enjoyment has a deluded way of looking at

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everything. When such a person is established in the proper activity of his unalloyed spiritual nature towards his transcendental Master, the only Recipient of all willing service in the eternal world, the true view of everything is revealed to his serving vision. There can be no ignorance and misery if the world is viewed aright.

The urge for sensuous enjoyment expresses itself in the institutions of family and society of worldly-minded persons. They are the traps of the deluding energy. But these very traps are used as instruments of service of the Absolute by the awakened soul. The hymns of the Bhagavat always reveal the eternal service of the Absolute on the highest plane, identical with the Personality of Sree

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Gaursundar, to the enlightened soul. I may refer in this connection to the interpretation of the Bhagabat that has been supplied by the commentaries of the Gaudiya Vaishnava School. We read in those commentaries that the hymns of Bhagabat 11/5/33-34, which seem to be in praise of Sree Ramachandra as the ideal monogamous husband, are in praise of Sree Krishna Chaitanya. This is not an instance of twisting the meaning of a text to suit the whim of the commentator. The language of Srimad Bhagabat reveals its true meaning only to the enlightened soul. That meaning is very different from what even the most renowned linguists may suppose it to be in their blind empirical vanity.

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The Bhagavat gives the highest position to the service of Sree Krishna by the gopces (spiritual milkmaids of Vrindavana). In its account of the rasa dance (circular amorous dance), it gives the clue to the distinctive nature of the services of Sree Radhika and other milkmaids.¹

Sree Krishna is served by Sree Radhika by herself and simultaneously by her multiple bodily forms in the shapes of the residents of Vraja. The services of the other milkmaids, of Nanda and Yasoda,—of Sridam and Sudam,—of all the associates and servitors of Krishna in Vraja, are part and parcel of the service of Sree Radhika. Sree Gurudeva belongs to this inner group of the servitors. He

1. Bhag. 10/30/24.

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is the Divine Manifestive Entity for disclosing the forms and activities of all eternal servitors of Sree Krishna. The function of Sree Gurudeva is a fundamental fact in the Leela of Vraja where Sree Krishna is served as the emporium of all the rasas. The servitors of Vraja minister to the gratification of the senses of Krishna in every way. Sree Gurudeva is the Divine exciting Agent of the serving activity of Vraja.

The nature of transcendental Vraja Leela is liable to be misunderstood by the empiric study of the Bhagabat. The limit of empiric inference is reached by the speculations of the paroksha method. By the abandonment of empiricism, represented by the aparoksha method, the Brahma

and Paramatma conceptions are realised. But these also are not objects of worship. We have already seen that the activity of service is possible only on the plane of the adhokshaja, which yields the realisation of the Majestic Personality of the Absolute as Sree Narayana. Aprakrita Vraja Leela, the central topic of the Bhagabat, is the highest form of adhokshaja realisation.

The dalliances of Sree Krishna in Vraja have a close resemblance to unconventional mundane amour. Sexuality, in all its forms, is an essentially repulsive affair on the mundane plane. It is, therefore, impossible to understand how the corresponding transcendental activity can be the most exquisitely wholesome service of the Absolute. It is, however, possible

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to be reconciled, to some extent, to the truth of the narrative of the Bhagabat if we are prepared to admit the reasonableness of the doctrine that the mundane world is the unwholesome reflection of the realm of the Absolute, and that this world appears in a scale of values that is the reverse of that which obtains in the reality of which it happens to be the shadow

In the form of the narrative of the Bhagabat, the Transcendental Vraja Leela manifests its descent to the plane of our mundane vision in the symbolic shapes resembling those of the corresponding mundane events. If we are disposed, for any reason, to underestimate the transcendental symbolism of the narrative of the Bhagabat, we are unable to avoid unfavourable and

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hasty conclusions regarding the nature of the highest, the most perfect and the most charming form of the loving service of the Divinity to which all other forms of his service are as the avenues of approach.

Sexuality symbolises the highest attraction and the acme of deliciousness of transcendental service. In the amorous performances of Vraja, the secrets of the eternal life are exhibited in their uncovered perfection in the activity of the love of unalloyed souls

We may notice in passing, certain significant differences, that should prevent any hasty conclusions, between Sree Krishna's amorous dalliances and mundane sex activity. In Vraja Leela Sree Krishna is under the age of eleven years. The spiritual milkmaids never

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conceive and bear children to Sree Krishna¹. The children born of Sree Krishna belong to the less perfect Leela of Dwaraka. To suppose it to be the product of anthropomorphic speculation is the greatest offence against the Divine Leela. The Bhagabat declares the realisation of the true nature of the Vraja Leela, in pursuance of the shrauta method, as the only remedy of all conditioned souls afflicted with the disease of mundane sexuality.

The conventions of civilised society for the regulation of sexual relationship attain their ethical perfection in the Varnashrama arrangement. A person belonging to the Varnashrama society can readily appreciate the transparent moral purity of life on the plane of

1. Bhag 10/29

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Vaikuntha and Ayodhya, although he cannot understand their esoteric nature. In those realms, Godhead poses as the ideal monogamous husband. Ethical restrictions of sex relationship that are imposed at Ayodhya by the form of the monogamous marriage are relaxed at Dwarka where the Absolute manifests His fuller Personality and appears in the guise of the polygamous husband. The conventions of marriage are abrogated in Vrindavana where the sanctity of wedlock becomes secondary and a foil to the amorous exploits of Sree Krishna in His Fullest Manifestation.

The spiritual function in its unalloyed form has a real correspondence to mundane activity, with the distinction that its objective, mode of activity and

instrumental are unalloyed spirit. This makes the inconceivable difference between spiritual function and mundane activity. It also supplies a kind of explanation of the fact that the activities in Vraja corresponding to the most wholesome performances on the mundane plane are, comparatively speaking, the least pleasing in the sight of Sree Krishna.

The sole object of all spiritual activity is gratification of the senses of Sree Krishna. When Sree Krishna is pleased, His servitors experience unmixed joy. This is the reverse of what happens in this world. Activity, that yields enjoyment to the person indulging in the same, alone possesses attraction on the mundane plane. . But such selfish pleasure is never coveted

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on the plane of spiritual service. The plane of mundane sensuous enjoyment is thereby sharply differentiated from that of spiritual service in respect of the quality and orientation of their respective activities. Desire for mundane enjoyment is potentially, but uncongenially, inherent in the soul, and it can be cultivated at his option. The practice of it, however, leads to the abeyance of his truly natural serving function. Modern civilisation does not suspect its own degradation in seeking exclusively for mundane enjoyment. The mind and body of man have a natural aptitude for sensuous gratification, and all his ordinary mundane activities are practised for its realisation.

For this reason very few people in this world can grasp the significance

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of the statement of the Bhagabat and other spiritual scriptures that the unallcayed essence of the soul has a natural aptitude for the exclusive service of the Absolute which is utterly incompatible with mundane sensuous living.

In the transcendental service of the Absolute the aptitude, form, as well as ingredients, are uncovered absolutely-wholesome living reality. In this complete uncovering of the proper nature of a person by the perfection of his serving function, he is enabled to realise fully the abiding interests of his real entity. Such unconditional submissive activity towards the Absolute is also necessarily identical with the realisation of the perfect freedom of the soul expressing itself in the highest forms of his serving activity.

Prayojana or Fruit.

In the position of complete realisation of the activity of the uncovered soul a person becomes eligible for participation in the Transcendental Pastime or Leela of Sree Krishna (Bhag. 1/7/10 and Sridhar's commentary on the same). The realisation of this all-absorbing love for Sree Krishna is the FRUIT or Prayojana of the eternal spiritual activities of all pure souls.

Sree Krishna is directly served by His plenary inner power as His only consort. The residents of Vraja, the plane of this inner service, are extensions of the figure of the plenary Divine power. They are the Divine participants in the Divine Pastime, as all those entities display the nature of the full servitorship of the Divinity.

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Not so the souls of men, all of whom are susceptible to the temptations offered by the deluding face of the plenary power for preventing the access of the non-residents of Vraja to the Arena of the Divine Pastime. We the sojourners of this mundane plane, have been thus kept out of the plane of Vraja by the deluding face of the Divine power.

Individual souls who are not part and parcel of the inner plenary power have no automatic access to the plane of Vraja. They are also lacking in spontaneous love for Sree Krishna. It is possible for them to attain to the love of Sree Krishna only as accepted subservients of the inhabitants of Vraja.

The first appearance of the spontaneous loving aptitude for Sree Krishna in

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an individual soul elevates him to the condition of the madhyam Bhagabat (mediocre servant of Sree Krishna) as distinct from the condition of the maha-Bhagabat who possesses love for Sree Krishna in the plenary measure which makes him eligible for participating, as a subservient of the servitors of Vraja, in the loving activities of the highest sphere of service.

In proportion as the hesitant, reverential, serving disposition of the madhyam Bhagabat is gradually developed, by the practice of pure service, into one of subserviency to the inhabitants of Vraja in their unconventional performances of the highest loving services of Sree Krishna, such hesitation and distance are superseded by growing

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confidence and proximity to the Object of one's highest love. Thence the spiritual vision is perfected, in conformity with the natural capacity of an individual, and he is enabled to realise the full function of his specific spiritual self.

Goloka-Vrindavana is realisable in the symbolic Vrindavana that is open to our view in this world by all persons whose love has been perfected by the mercy of the inhabitants of Transcendental Vrinda, and not otherwise. The grossest misunderstanding of the subject of the Vrinda-Leela of Sree Krishna is inevitable if these considerations are not kept in view. All persons, under the sinister influence of the deluding power of Nescience, are subject to such misunderstanding.

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in one form or another. They are fated to see nothing but a mundane tract of country in the terrestrial (Bhauma) Vrindavana, and the practice of the grossest forms of debauchery in the Vraja Pastimes of Sree Krishna

But the true esoteric vision of the maha-Bhagavat is very different from such realisation of deluded humanity. It is described in Bhagavat 10/35/9 and sequel, and also in Chaitanya-charitamrita Madhya Leela, 17-55

“ When He (Sree Krishna-Chaitanya) catches sight of a wood, it appears to Him in the likeness of Vrindavana, when He looks at a hill, He mistakes it for Gobardhana ”

